

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on RM-10869, Mr. Ronald D. Lowrance, K4SX's petition for restructuring of the Amateur Radio Service

Although I am Chairman of the Question Pool Committee (QPC) of the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC), my comments are personal and do not necessarily represent those of the QPC or the NCVEC. However, they are based on my experience as a member of the QPC since 1996 and as chair since August 2000. I have absolutely no financial or pecuniary interest in any aspect of the Amateur Radio Service including testing or the preparation of testing or training materials.

The petitioner requests that no changes be made in the General or Amateur Extra class license including retention of the Element 1 (CW) requirement. I respectfully disagree

Morse code has a long and distinguished history in Amateur Radio, but technology is an ever evolving entity. The original purposes for CW testing are no longer required from an operational or regulatory standpoint. Sending a message at five words per minute is excruciatingly slow means to convey a meaningful message and is hardly demonstration of proficiency in Morse code. In my opinion it does not represent a level of achievement that the commission should recognize as a requirement for an Amateur Radio Service license at any level, just as the international community no longer requires such a demonstration.

As the international treaty Morse code requirement is *passé*, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) comes into play. The whole issue of "reasonable accommodation" for a disability becomes an issue. I have already seen individuals at testing sessions seek a waiver to the existing Morse code requirements due to the change in the international treaty. If Morse code is retained the commission will have to adopt procedures to deal with waiver requests. This was a torturous undertaking for the 13 WPM and 20 WPM tests prior to April 15, 2000. This topic consumed more time than any other subject in FCC—VEC—VE communications. It will be equally torturous and consume as much of the Commission's time for a five WPM test whose only apparent function is to demonstrate proficiency for a single signal communications mode with an old and honorable history.

The petitioner speaks of United States leadership – in this particular case the most of the Amateur Radio world community has moved on. The Morse code requirement has been or is in the process of being eliminated. To retain the Morse code requirement would not be leadership, but exactly the opposite. To increase the speed requirement from five WPM to 13 would be totally at odds with all other administrations.

The petitioner also speaks of Morse code's historic place in the Amateur Radio Service. I concur that Morse code has a historic place in the Amateur Radio Service, but none of the petitions before the FCC advocate abolition of Morse code as a communications mode. They do advocate that an operator no longer be required to demonstrate proficiency in this mode. The international treaty revisions of last July leave this decision to each administration. As mentioned above most other administrations have eliminated this requirement.

The argument that Morse code will get through when not other mode will is no longer true. There are many digital modes that are more noise immune and are self error correcting and do not require skill operators at both ends. With the continued reduction in the cost of computational hardware and the embedding of this hardware within

commercially available radios, the ability to an Amateur Radio operator to efficiently and effectively operate this new digital high throughput modes is far more important on a home land security basis than his/her ability to communicate to other hams via a low throughput mode the requires skilled operators at both end of the communications channel.

In light of the above, I respectfully request that you reject this petition in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Neustadter, W4WW